

Listing of Claims:

1-25 (canceled)

26. (currently amended) A method of printing on a thermoplastic material, the method comprising the steps of:

- electrographically printing a toner directly onto the [extruded] thermoplastic material such that the toner contacts a surface portion of the thermoplastic material, the toner consisting of a coloring agent and thermoplastic toner particles;
- bringing only the surface portion of the thermoplastic material into a material reactive state; and
- hardening the surface portion of the thermoplastic material thereby establishing a bond between the toner and the thermoplastic material.

27. (currently amended) The method of claim 26 wherein [only a surface portion of the thermoplastic material is brought into the material reactive state] the toner is fluid.

28. (original) The method of claim 26 wherein the toner is electrostatically printed onto the thermoplastic material.

29. (original) The method of claim 26 wherein the thermoplastic material is heat-softened in the material reactive state.

30. (original) The method of claim 26 wherein the thermoplastic material is brought to the material reactive state by thermal energy.

31. (original) The method of claim 26 further comprising the step of bringing the toner into a toner reactive state.

32. (original) The method of claim 31 wherein the toner and thermoplastic material are fluid in their respective reactive states.

33. (currently amended) The method of claim 31 wherein the surface portion of the thermoplastic material is in the material reactive state before printing and wherein the toner is heated by the thermoplastic material upon contact with the surface portion of the thermoplastic material to reach the toner reactive state.

34. (original) The method of claim 31 wherein the toner is heated to the toner reactive state and the thermoplastic material is brought to the material reactive state through contact with the toner.

35. (original) The method of claim 26 wherein the thermoplastic material is hardened by cooling the thermoplastic material and the toner.

36. (original) The method of claim 26 wherein the thermoplastic material has a surface on which the toner is printed and the toner sinks into the surface to form a smooth surface structure.

37. (currently amended) The method of claim 26 wherein the [thermoplastic material has a] surface portion on which the toner is printed and the thermoplastic toner particles are of the same thermoplastic material [as the surface].

38. (currently amended) The method of claim 26 wherein the thermoplastic material has a surface on which the toner is printed, the method further comprising the steps of:

- applying heat to at least the surface of the thermoplastic material to produce the reactive state;
- maintaining at least the surface of the thermoplastic material in the reactive state; and
- printing the toner onto the surface while the surface is in the reactive state.

39. (currently amended) A method of printing on a thermoplastic material, the method comprising the steps of:

- heating a toner comprised of a coloring agent and thermoplastic toner particles of the same composition as the thermoplastic material to a toner reactive state;
- heating the [molded] thermoplastic material to a material reactive state;
- after [the] heating [steps] the toner and heating the thermoplastic material, electrographically printing the toner directly onto the thermoplastic material; and
- hardening the thermoplastic material thereby establishing a bond between the toner and the thermoplastic material,

whereby the thermoplastic material and toner form a consistent material composition.

40. (currently amended) The method of claim 39 wherein during printing the toner [is heated by contact with] contacts a surface portion of the thermoplastic material and wherein only the surface portion of the thermoplastic material is heated to the material reactive state.

41. (currently amended) The method of claim 39 wherein the [thermoplastic material is heated by contact with the] toner is fluid in the toner reactive state.

42. (previously canceled).

43. (currently amended) A method of printing on a molded thermoplastic material, the method comprising the steps of:

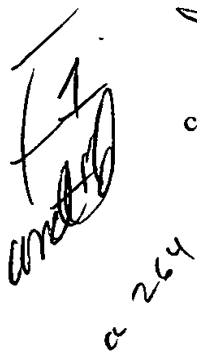
- heating the thermoplastic material to a material reactive state;
- electrographically printing a toner directly onto the molded thermoplastic material such that the toner is heated [by] upon contact with the thermoplastic material and reaches a toner reactive state; and
- hardening the thermoplastic material thereby establishing a bond between the toner and the thermoplastic material,

whereby the thermoplastic material and toner form a consistent material composition.

44. (original) The method of claim 43 wherein the toner is comprised of a coloring agent and thermoplastic toner particles.

45. (original) The method of claim 43 wherein the toner and the thermoplastic material, when in their respective reactive states, react with one another to establish the bond.

46. (original) The method of claim 44 wherein the toner particles and the material are of the same material selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, polypropylene, polystyrene, polycarbonate and acrylonitrile butadiene styrene.


47. (new) A method of producing a finished printed workpiece, the method comprising:

- supplying a thermoplastic material in a raw state to a processing machine;
- processing the material, including heating the material to a material reactive state and molding the material into a molded thermoplastic material;
- while the molded thermoplastic material is in the material reactive state from processing, printing a toner directly onto the molded material, the toner consisting of a coloring agent and thermoplastic toner particles; and
- hardening the molded material thereby establishing a bond between the toner and the molded material.

48. (new) The method of claim 47 wherein the toner is electrographically printed onto the molded thermoplastic material and the molded thermoplastic material is extruded.

49. (new) The method of claim 47 wherein the toner is fluid.

50. (new) The method of claim 47 wherein the toner particles are of the same composition as the thermoplastic material.

